

thermoplastic resin containing the carboxylic group (cross-linking agent/thermoplastic resin containing carboxylic group (weight ratio of effective solid matter)) is 1/100 to 50/100;

a process for preparing the above water-based pigment dispersion characterized in that the process comprises

(1) a step for predispersing a pigment and a water soluble or self-emulsifying thermoplastic resin containing a carboxylic group to give a mixture,

(2) a step for treating the mixture by a dispersing machine and dispersing the pigment with the thermoplastic resin containing the carboxylic group to give a dispersion,

(3) a step for cross-linking the thermoplastic resin containing the carboxylic group in the dispersion with a cross-linking agent, and

(4) a step for adjusting pH of the dispersion containing the pigment and the thermoplastic resin containing the carboxylic group, which is cross-linked, to alkaline range,

wherein pH of the dispersion at finishing cross-linking reaction is 6.0 to 8.0; and

a water-based ink containing the above water-based pigment dispersion.

~~Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 6, with the following rewritten paragraph:~~

*A3*  
The water-based pigment dispersion of the present invention is, as mentioned above, a dispersion in which a pigment is dispersed with a water soluble or self-emulsifying thermoplastic resin containing carboxylic group (hereinafter sometimes referred to as simply "thermoplastic resin"), the ratio of the pigment to the thermoplastic resin (pigment/thermoplastic resin (weight ratio of effective solid matter)) is 10/10 to 10/1, the thermoplastic resin is cross-linked with a cross-linking agent after the pigment is dispersed with the thermoplastic resin, and the ratio of the cross-linking agent to the thermoplastic resin (cross-linking agent/thermoplastic resin (weight ratio of effective solid matter)) is 1/100 to 50/100.

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

*A4*  
**Claims 1, 2 and 8 have been amended as follows:**

1. (Amended) A water-based pigment dispersion in which a pigment is dispersed with a water soluble or self-emulsifying thermoplastic resin containing carboxylic group, characterized in that the ratio of the pigment to the thermoplastic resin containing the carboxylic group (pigment/thermoplastic resin containing carboxylic group (weight ratio of effective solid matter)) is 10/10 to 10/1,

the thermoplastic resin containing the carboxylic group is cross-linked with a cross-linking agent after the pigment is dispersed with the thermoplastic resin, and